



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes for September 11, 2003

Members in Attendance:

Mark Tisa	Designee, DFW
Joe McGinn	Designee, DCR
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, DHCD
Cynthia Giles	Designee, DEP
Gerard Kennedy	Designee, DAR
Gary Clayton	Public Member
Francis Veale, Jr.	Public Member
David Rich	Public Member
Matt Rhodes	Public Member

Other in Attendance:

Dave Armstrong	USGS
Mike Gildesgame	DCR
Peter Weiskel	USGS
Steve Garabedian	USGS
Vicki Gartland	DCR
Sara Cohen	DCR
Eileen Simonson	WSCAC
Margaret Kearns	Riverways Programs
Melissa Cryan	EOEA
Vandana Rao	EOEA
Katie Krause	Conservation Law Foundation
Duane LeVangie	DEP
Michele Drury	DCR
John Carney	CRWA
Ron Sharpin	DCR – Water Supply Protection

Item 1: Executive Director's Report:

Hydrologic Conditions Report:

- It's wet, with the potential of more rain.
 - Groundwater conditions are normal, precipitation is normal throughout most of the state, and streamflow levels are pretty much above normal.
- The WRC meetings will remain at the 20 Somerset St. location for the foreseeable future..

- The thoughts shared at the workshop in July will be linked to the development of a new statewide water policy. A task force will be set up to develop new policy in the next 6-12 months. Gary asked who would be leading it? Karl said that it's too soon to announce. Gary asked if they would have the opportunity to help frame what the policy will hold? Karl said that everyone should feel free to call and voice his or her opinions to the Secretary.
- Section #111 in the FY04 budget reduces the number of public members from six to five. Eileen wanted to know why WRC can't add another state member in lieu of eliminating a public member. One possibility could be a MWRA member since they administer the largest Interbasin transfer in the state. Another possibility would be to add someone from EOTC.
- Michele Drury – upcoming ITA announcements: There is one active application from Reading for admission into MWRA. Their Final EIR should be submitted by 9/15/03. If they have responded adequately to the questions asked of them, the application will be brought before the WRC in November. Wilmington should be submitting their DEIR in October to MEPA. Town of Plainville will be applying for a full review by the end of September. They have been through MEPA before the change in process. Town of Cohasset, Erikson Development community Request for Determination of Insignificant will be submitted in October. Brockton will be filing notice of project change by the end of September.
- Tisa asked about the letter regarding North Attleborough that was sent to the WRC. Are there potential policy changes due to this? It should have been brought before the Commission, even if just as an FYI. Drury stated that DEP and DCR were meeting with the town in late October to finalize the ACO, which will address the IBT issues. After that meeting, the agencies will give the WRC a presentation on the situation.
- Tisa asked about the letter regarding North Attleborough that was sent to the WRC. Are there potential policy changes due to this? It should have been brought before the Commission, even if just as an FYI. Drury stated that DEP and DCR were meeting with the town in late October to finalize the ACO, which will address the IBT issues. After that meeting, the agencies will give the WRC a presentation on the situation.

Item 2: Vote on meeting minutes of August 2001 and April, May, and July 2003

V O T E	McGinn moved with a second by Veale to accept the meeting minutes of August 2001. The motion was approved unanimously.
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V O T E	Giles moved with a second by Clayton to accept the meeting minutes of April 2003. The motion was approved unanimously.
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V O T E	McGinn moved with a second by Veale to accept the meeting minutes of May 2003. The motion was approved unanimously.
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V O T E	McGinn moved with a second by Contreas to accept the meeting minutes of July 2003. The motion was approved unanimously.
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Item 3: Vote: IBT policy for small sewer connections

The policy's purpose is to formalize existing policies and precedents for smaller sewer connections that had not been considered in an original wastewater management plan and could increase the amount of interbasin transfer. Many are so small they are able to find within the system they are proposing to connect to excessive infiltration and inflow and are able to remove an amount equal to what they would be putting into the sewer.

Marilyn Contreas pointed out some inconsistencies in the text that will be dealt with. This policy should give more clarification as to what is determined to be significant or not. Cynthia Giles suggested that the #7 requirement – to write a plan – be discretionary. Eileen Simonson said that policy is being changed through vote and that isn't right. She was concerned also that policy is being set on one example, which may be a unique case and may not be jurisdictional. These may be town issues that should be dealt with at that level. Mike wasn't sure that the policy is applicable to these concerns.

The Commission recommended that the policy be revised and dealt with again at a future meeting.

Item 4: Presentation: Current USGS Studies: Focus on the statewide habitat study

Peter Weiskel handed out slides of his presentation which focused on four aspects of USGS's program in Massachusetts: monitoring networks, basin modeling, urban studies, and aquifer studies. The stream gauging network started in 1904, with the first gage in the Connecticut watershed. Massachusetts has one of the longest monitoring programs in the country. Gages have many different uses: flood prediction, low flow monitoring, monitoring for affects of withdrawals, recreational enthusiasts use gages. There are 92 observation wells that are monitored monthly, used for Title V and high groundwater levels. Urban studies also have been completed, studying such fecal coliform's effect on water quality. Aquifer studies included sources of water to wells, Zone IIs, zones of contribution, ponds, streams, and coastal embayments. About \$1 million a year is spent on monitoring this.

The New England Water-Use Database pilot project was done in the SuAsCo basin. It is a Microsoft Access database, allowing managers to store and retrieve much data from the program. Water use patterns can be studied from this data. Draft reports are currently being written, the final report should be out early next year.

Dave Armstrong discussed the latest project being worked on – a study of streamflow and habitat. The study objectives were to look at some statistics from relatively unaltered gauging stations throughout the year. The study aimed to improve the understanding of summer streamflows in Massachusetts. It will compare natural flow rivers habitat to altered flow rivers. The fish communities in the rivers were also to be studied to see how they were affected by the change in river flows. By looking at sites that are relatively unaltered, riffle sites can be studied to see how they are affected by natural low flows. Gages can be grouped into four regions, based on sandy gravel percentage. The report gave a sense of summer streamflow values based on mean values.

Item 5: Presentation: Water Assets Study

Massachusetts is a water-rich state, so why is there a shortage of water in certain places? The Water Assets Study will try to answer this question, as part of a larger statewide strategy to: 1. Assess what we have (both ecologically and in human infrastructure), 2. Anticipate what we may need (both ecologically and in human terms), and 3. Plan for the future, protect our resources, and preserve the hydrologic cycle. This project necessarily will be integrated with the USGS habitat studies described above in order to develop policy. The study includes 131 towns/cities along the 495 corridor.

The results of the study should help communities protect their current supplies through land use decisions, proactively protect potential future supplies through land protection, and reduce demand. The state will be responsible for assessing the regional water supply infrastructure, identifying “hot spots” where demand exceeds sustainable sources, and identifying potential conservation strategies to meet long-term human and habitat needs. Five maps will be produced for each community. Maps 1 and 2 will show towns what their current land use is, and what their potential land use at build-out could be, within their existing Zone II’s and Zone B’s; Map 3 will show towns unprotected land that may be critical for potential future water supplies (based on meeting Zone I requirements), and where these lands coincide with aquifers, core habitat, and wetlands and riparian corridors; Maps 4 and 5 will show towns their current land use and the potential future land use at build-out within these potential future water supply areas. In addition to providing maps to communities, the project vendor will survey water suppliers for information, to help increase the robustness of the State’s databases and clarify service areas, service populations, and conservation efforts. The work builds off portions of the build-out analysis done for each community two years ago.

Item 6: Presentation: Current status of the Ipswich Pilot Project

We have the science; USGS has done the assessment piece. This project is the assessment piece – let’s go out into the communities and figure out what we can do. The approach is to use the following tools in each of the communities (and hopefully bringing in outside funding):

Tool 1: Low Impact Development (LID)

Tool 2: Stormwater Infiltration
Tool 3: Demand Management
Tool 4: Local Planning Tools
Tool 5: Reuse
Tool 6: Education and Outreach

An intern from Tufts, Marilyn McCrory, put together a summary for each community as to where they are getting their water, how much land they have in the basin, what their type of water use is, their location in the basin, any key riffles in that community, and conservation. There was a wide range of responses found in each basin. A sheet was completed for each town that included contact information, average daily water use, whether their permits are registered, how built out they are, what type of land use they have. For each town, it was evaluated what they should be focused on in the future and then possible funding sources to get those things completed. Hopefully we will be able to work with the Ipswich Council to get these recommendations implemented.

Karl Honkonen handed out an update of the 2003 Workplan to the group. Members are invited to review the plan and decide where we're going next year. The 2004 Workplan should be in place by January.

Meeting adjourned.

Meeting minutes approved 12/11/03